

## Senator Carlos Uresti

*Where there is no vision, the people will perish - Proverbs, 29:18*

This is the personal credo of State Senator Carlos I. Uresti, a leader for Senate District 19 and the State of Texas who envisions thriving communities, safe and healthy children, an educated workforce, and responsible growth. A lifelong resident of his district, he is deeply committed to the success of each community.

Senator Uresti represents almost 800,000 people in District 19, one the largest geographical legislative districts in the nation. It contains all or part of 17 counties covering more than 35,000 square miles and spans about 400 miles of the Texas Mexico border. The district contains 55 school districts; almost 23,000 oil and gas wells, 10 state parks, three national parks, and more than 2,700 miles of highways and interstate transportation infrastructure.

After graduating from McCollum High School, Senator Uresti enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps Reserves at the age of 18 as a Private First Class. He earned a Bachelor's degree in Political Science and a Teaching Certificate from St. Mary's University, and was then commissioned as a 2nd Lieutenant. Senator Uresti rose to the rank of captain and earned the Navy Achievement Medal during his four years of active duty as a combat engineer. Since graduating from St. Mary's University School of Law in 1992, he has been in private practice in San Antonio, currently with The Uresti Law Firm, P.C.

Balancing career and family life is important to Senator Uresti, whose wife, Lleanna, is a former school counselor and now the full-time mother of two children, Sebastian and Katalina. Senator Uresti raised his two sons, Michael and Carlos, Jr. in the same neighborhood in which he spent his formative years. Both Michael and Carlos Jr. graduated from McCollum High School and continued in their father's footsteps in their own way. Michael is a 2005 graduate of Texas A&M University-College Station and went on to obtain a law degree from his father's Alma Mater, St. Mary's University. Carlos Jr. graduated from McCollum in 2004 and followed his roots to the same military branch as his father. He graduated Texas A&M University-San Antonio as a Corporal in the U.S. Marine Corps Reserves and is now attending St. Mary's University in pursuit of a law degree.

A 1997 special election to the Texas House of Representatives opened the door to state politics for Senator Uresti. He served in the House for nine years and was the chairman of the Committee on Human Services during the 78th Legislature and the Committee on Government Reform during the 79th Legislature. Senator Uresti was elected to the Texas Senate in 2006, riding on his reputation as a champion of children, seniors, and veterans. During his 17 years of public service, Senator Uresti has authored, co-authored and sponsored numerous bills during both his House and Senate careers that provided:

- Landmark reforms of the Child Protective Services (CPS) and Adult Protective Services (APS), special training for CPS employees who are hired for or promoted to a supervisory position; the release of certain information on child deaths involving abuse or neglect; the creation of a statewide Blue Ribbon Task Force to create new policies and strategies to combat child abuse and neglect;
- An expansion of the state's newborn screening program, which could save an estimated 150 children a year by testing for 20 additional genetic disorders;
- A dissolution election for Bexar Metropolitan Water District, which resulted in the abolition of the troubled district by a vote of its ratepayers;
- A new system for valuing oil and gas properties, bringing certainty and stability to the property tax assessment process for Texas counties;
- A \$225 million Transportation Infrastructure Fund that allows counties, for the first time, to seek state General Revenues for the repair and maintenance of county roads;
- A liability protection measure for the state's burgeoning space tourism industry;
- A ban on clinical medical trials involving foster children or children in the juvenile justice system;
- The statewide establishment of the Nurse-Family Partnership program for child abuse prevention;
- The expansion of pre-Kindergarten funding for children of active duty military personnel in Texas;
- The establishment of the Silver Alert system, modeled after the successful Amber Alert, to spread notice of missing elderly persons;
- Authorization and funding for Texas A&M University at San Antonio;
- Economic development authority for military installations affected by Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC);
- Economic incentives to attract industrial and manufacturing growth to San Antonio, including Toyota and Boeing at Port San Antonio;
- The privacy of veterans' service records following their discharge from the military; a property tax exemption for veterans who are 100 percent disabled from their military service.

Senator Uresti is vice chair of two Senate Committees — Administration and Agriculture, Rural Affairs, and Homeland Security. He is also a member of the Health and Human Services, Natural Resources, and Transportation Committees. Lieutenant Governor David Dewhurst appointed Senator Uresti to the National Conference of State Legislatures' standing Health Committee in 2007 and to both the Energy Council and the Senate Select Committee on Transportation Funding in 2013.

Devoted to fighting child abuse and neglect as chairman of the House Committee on Health and Human Services, Senator Uresti led the charge to reform the Child Protective Services during the interim of the 78th Legislature, and brought statewide attention and major reform to protect our children from abuse and

neglect. He continues to be a voice throughout Texas for the most vulnerable of our state.

Long active in his community, Senator Uresti is the founding chairman of the Blue Ribbon Task Force, a coalition bringing together hundreds of community activists and leaders to fight the causes of child abuse and neglect. He also sits on the Board of Trustees for Communities-In-Schools of San Antonio, which is the nation's largest community-based dropout prevention organization. Each year Senator Uresti sponsors a Back-to-School and Health Fair event in San Antonio and participates in similar events across the district that include the distribution of free backpacks to students.

A fierce advocate for veterans, Senator Uresti is a lifetime member of Veteran of Foreign Wars Manuel Alvarado Post 9186, a member of the United States Marine Corps League, the American Legion, and the Alamo Silver Wings Airborne Association. In the 81st Legislature, Senator Uresti co-sponsored legislation granted a full homeowners property tax exemption to veterans who were 100 percent disabled from their military service.

He has worked diligently to encourage economic development within Senate District 19, including the Toyota manufacturing plant, the revitalization of Brooks City-Base, Port San Antonio, the Texas A&M University campus in South San Antonio, and the South Texas Regional Training Center in Hondo.

Senator Uresti has received more than 100 awards and recognitions, including multiple Legislator of the Year awards and other honors for his efforts to combat child abuse and neglect. For his work to re-establish adequate funding for CHIP and children's Medicaid, and for helping to increase the number of medical residents and residency programs, the Texas Medical Association named Senator Uresti one of Texas Medicine's Best Legislators in 2007. He also received the 2008 "Champion for Children" Award from the Texas Coalition of Homes for Children and Texas CASA's Big Voices for Little Texans Award in 2009 and 2013.

For his work on road funding issues in the 83rd Legislature, Sen. Uresti was given TIPRO's first George P. Mitchell Tip of the Hat Award and named a friend of county government by the Texas Association of Counties. He has also received the Mentor of the Year Award from the San Antonio Young Lawyers Association and the Legislative Leadership Award from the Texas Association of Mexican American Chambers of Commerce. The Harlandale Independent School District Council of PTAs awarded him a Lifetime Membership in the Texas Congress of Parents and Teachers, and the American Cancer Society honored him with the Texas Advocacy Award for his legislative efforts to curb tobacco use, particularly among teenagers.